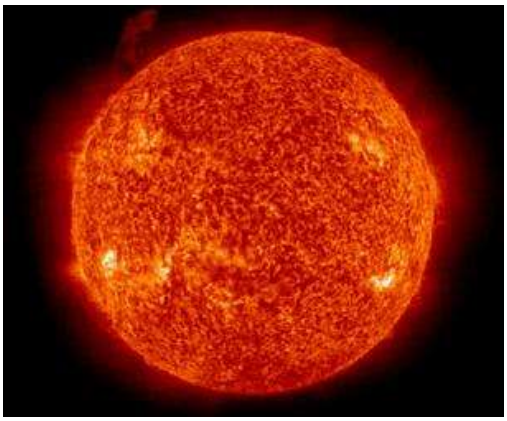
UK and US to undertake collaboration on space weather



31 May 2011 - UK Prime Minister David Cameron and US President Barack Obama welcome the growing partnership between the Met Office and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service in working toward the delivery of space weather alerts.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Met Office and NOAA in February 2011 provides for a coordinated US-UK partnership. This involves a range of UK and US agencies and organisations in the delivery of Space Weather alerts to help provide critical infrastructure protection around the globe.

The two governments have announced that they will embark together on an ambitious programme to create the world's first combined space weather model capable of forecasting terrestrial weather and also indicating where, when, and for how long space weather effects will persist in our upper atmosphere. Space weather anomalies can disrupt and degrade GPS-enabled positioning, navigation, and timing capabilities.

"We're thrilled that this important partnership is moving forward," said Tom Bogdan, director of NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center.

It's noteworthy, he said, that the U.S.-UK collaboration involves operational space weather forecasting as well as the scientific research necessary to improve space weather forecasts. "A successful space weather program must include both components - operations and science."

Phil Evans, Director of Government Services at the Met Office said: "Working with NOAA is a crucial step in creating the essential partnerships required to ensure the UK is warned of, and protected against the threat posed by space weather"

The partnership was particularly acknowledged in a joint statement in which the leaders agreed in increase higher education, science, and innovation collaboration in the coming months.

Contact information

Met Office Press Office: **+44 (0)1392 886655**

E-mail: Press Office

Met Office Customer Centre: **01392 885680**

If you're outside the UK: **+44 1392 885680**

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